

**Edwards Secures Funding to Build New Fort Hood Soldier Readiness Center**

***New Center to Replace Site of Tragic Shooting that Killed 13, Wounded 30***

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Representative Chet Edwards announced today that he has secured a \$16.5 million earmark to build a new Soldier Readiness Center (SRC) at Fort Hood in the 2010 Supplemental Appropriations bill, which funds military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The new SRC will replace the site of the tragic shooting on November 5, 2009 where 12 soldiers and 1 Army civilian were killed and 30 wounded.

Edwards, Chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, made the following remarks:

Last year, America mourned with the soldiers and families of Fort Hood in the wake of the unimaginable tragedy that took the lives of 13 brave soldiers and wounded 30 others at the Soldier Readiness Center. We will never forget that tragic day or those who give so much everyday to defend our nation.

The Readiness Center is where soldiers go to process papers when they are deploying overseas and when they return home.

It would not be right to ask Ft. Hood soldiers deploying or returning home from overseas to process their papers at the site of a terrible tragedy, and that is why I am asking that \$16.5 million be included in the supplemental appropriations bill that funds the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am gratified to announce that my \$16.5 million earmark request for a new Ft. Hood Readiness Center will be included in the war funding bill which will be debated and voted on as early as Thursday evening in the House Appropriations Committee. Our Ft. Hood soldiers deserve a new Readiness Center, and the U.S. Army is in full support of this project.

The last place a Ft. Hood soldier visits prior to deployment overseas and after returning home should not be the site of a senseless, terrible tragedy. At present, due to the ongoing investigation into the shooting, soldiers are currently forced to go to multiple locations to complete the readiness process, and the old facility was not sufficient to perform this vital function for a large number of soldiers.

The new Soldier Readiness Center will be a first-class facility that will be able to process over 500 soldiers more efficiently and effectively than the old Center. Given the continued deployment of Ft. Hood soldiers, coupled with the increasing mobilization of Army Reserve units training at North Ft. Hood, this project is timely and necessary.

I would add that the \$16.5 million cost of the new Center will be paid for by bid savings on other

overseas military construction projects.

Even as we build the new Soldier Readiness Center, I know our thoughts and prayers are with those who were wounded and those who lost loved ones at the hands of a terrorist in our midst.

*Edwards, co-chairs the House Army Caucus, and represented Fort Hood through three combat deployments from 1991 to 2004.*